



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA

Transportation Advisory Committee

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 28, 2001
10:00 a.m. Greensboro, NC

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair, City Council
Mayor Keith Holliday	City Council
Robbie Perkins	City Council
Chairman Bob Landreth	Board of County Commissioners
Don Vaughan	City Council
Mary Rakestraw	Board of County Commissioners

OTHERS PRESENT

Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair / GDOT	Brent McKinney	Winston-Salem DOT
Mike Mills	NC Division Seven Office	JoAnn Oerter	NCDOT
Jim Ayres	Town of Pleasant Garden	Craig McKinney	GDOT
Tyler Meyer	GDOT	Veronica Dunlap	GDOT
Scott Rhine	PART	Peggy Seay	Triad Reporting & Typing

Chair Carmany called the meeting to order.

ACTION ITEMS

Approve Minutes of January 31, 2001, meeting.

Mr. Landreth moved approval of the January 31, 2001, minutes as written, seconded by Ms. Rakestraw. There being no discussion, the motion was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Landreth was excused from the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Annual MPO Self-Certification

Mr. Meyer said the certification was an annual statement of compliance with the various Federal requirements for the MPO process. He referred the TAC members to the summary. He said the recommended action from TCC is for the TAC to pass that resolution today.

Mr. Vaughan moved approval of the resolution on the annual MPO Self-Certification, seconded by Mr. Perkins. There being no discussion, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Adopt Planning Work Program FY 2001-2002

Mr. Meyer said this item was discussed in some detail at the last meeting. The Planning Work Program is a document which programs all of the Federal funding funds that are expected to be used for the next year. It includes Federal highway, Federal transit, and NCDOT funds. The proposed action from the TCC was to adopt that and forward it on to the NCDOT for processing.

Mr. Vaughan moved approval of the Planning Work Program FY 2001-2002, seconded by Ms. Rakestraw. There being no discussion, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mayor Keith Holliday arrived and participated in the balance of the meeting.

Amend Planning Work Program FY 2000-2001

Mr. Meyer said this was an amendment for last year's Planning Work Program, specifically to the Federal highway funding portion. It will change the balance shown in the Planning Work Program to remove funds which are not expected to be used in this fiscal year. It is an accounting step which is needed because if left in the program until the end of the year, the funds would get caught under NCDOT's audit procedures. Removing the funds now frees them to be amended back into the Planning Work Program in the future as needed.

Mr. Vaughan moved approval of the amendment to the Planning Work Program FY 2000-2001, seconded by Ms. Rakestraw. There being no discussion, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Urban Loop Intelligent Transportation System Projects

Mr. Meyer said this was a follow-up on last month's presentation on the Intelligent Transportation System Projects. Staff has reviewed the proposal and developed recommended actions. These actions include MPO support for the ITS components that are proposed for the Southern Loop: From I-40 and I-85 over to I-85; the Western Urban Loop, from I-85 to Bryan Boulevard; and that portion of the Eastern Urban Loop which goes between I-85, I-40, and US 70. They recommend not supporting the ITS components in the rest of the Loop at this time. They recommend using any of the additional fund that were proposed to fund those portions of the project be used to accelerate the Eastern Urban Loop between US 29 and US 70. The other part of that resolution would be encouraging cost savings, where possible, by connecting to fiber optic cables that will be installed in the City Advanced Signal System rather than running the cable around the full length of the project. If feasible, this could result in some significant cost savings. The TCC reviewed this and recommends the TAC adoption of the proposed resolution that was included in the packets.

Mr. Vaughan moved the adoption of the Urban Loop Intelligent Transportation System Project as recommended by staff, seconded by Ms. Rakestraw.

Mr. Westmoreland explained that the ITS projects will consist of closed circuit TV cameras, variable message signs, etc.

There being no other questions or comments, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Chair Carmany said April 12 and May 10 had been proposed as upcoming meeting dates. She asked if the letter from NCDOT about adopting the MTIP FY 2002 – 2008 by April 1 would impact that in any way.

Mr. Meyer said it would not. He has been informed that an April meeting will be fine for approving the MTIP document for State TIP development purposes.

Mr. Westmoreland said one thing talked about at the last meeting that he was still trying to work out with Mr. Mills, is the possibilities of using some of the City's bond fund money which was approved in November to help accelerate or create a project for the Gallimore Dairy Road improvements from International Drive up to Market Street. Mr. Mills is looking at the possibility of doing that as a Division design and construct project, which means it could be done in a quicker time frame than it could be if it was in the TIP. The second thing they are looking at doing is developing two separate TIP project for intersection improvements to Guilford College Road and Market Street, and Guilford College Road and Friendly Avenue. These were identified as being impacted when the interchange was removed at Market Street with the Outer Loop.

Mr. Westmoreland was asked about the public hearing on Friendly Avenue and the widening which was scheduled for tonight.

Mr. Westmoreland said that actually was tomorrow night at the Westminster Presbyterian Church from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. for the widening improvements along Friendly Avenue from Westridge Road down to Holden Road. Staff is looking at a couple of different options there; one is a 5-lane section, one is a median divided section.

It was agreed that April 12 and May 10, 2001, at 10:00 a.m. would be work for upcoming meeting dates.

PART Activities and Funding

Chair Carmany welcomed Mr. Brent McKinney, who is the Winston-Salem Transportation Director and the Interim Director for PART.

Mr. McKinney said he was primarily here to talk about the action taken by the PART Board of Trustees in January to request approval by the various Boards of County Commissioners of one of the funding options available under PART's enabling legislation.

Mr. McKinney reviewed the need for regional planning. We know that that North Carolina is the sixth fastest growing State in the country. We know that 60 percent of our growth is coming from in-migration. We know that there are many things here which attract people. We also know that 63 percent of all of our growth in North Carolina is occurring in three areas: the Charlotte-Rock Hill metropolitan area, the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area, and the Triad. He compared the present to 30 years ago and cited the tremendous growth and development that has occurred, along with all of the major roadway construction projects that have occurred.

Mr. McKinney presented some illustrations of how our area has looked in 1994 and how our area is projected to look in 2025 based land development and growth trends. He observed the need to address our transportation needs on a regional basis.

Mr. McKinney described the regional makeup of the PART Board. He then gave background as to how PART was created and how the State had supported the endeavor. He gave cited the PART work program and said it was very aggressive. The work plan includes a commuter rail study funded with Federal and State funds. It includes an intercity passenger rail study of passenger rail service from Raleigh to Asheville through the Triad and generally along the I-40 corridor. The State's western passenger rail study report is due tomorrow. He thought the State would refurbish all the old rail stations up the I-40 corridor and start running a State-sponsored bus service up that corridor.

PART proposes to implement a regional transit system, and coordinate human service transportation. It is studying additional and future roadway needs in the airport area. It is advocating implementation of the regional land use and transportation study recommendations. It now manages the RSVP ride-sharing and vanpool program.

Mr. McKinney discussed a 5-year projection on the cost of existing and proposed PART programs. He emphasized the need for regional bus service. He noted that NCDOT will support the Regional Planner's salary at a declining rate over a three year period upon which PART will need to cover the full cost. He discussed the potential to leverage large federal grants through implementing the rail studies. He noted that PART's authority to levy a rental car tax of up to 5% or a vehicle registration fee of up to \$5 contingent upon the approval of the subject county's Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Vaughan referred to toll road discussions in the General Assembly. He asked about the potential for Toll Roads in the Triad.

Mr. McKinney did not think so. The thing which might make sense from his perspective would be to toll be those roads which pass through North Carolina, such as I-77 or I-95.

A discussion was had as to the noise walls of grey and beige concrete in Winston-Salem and Greensboro versus the brick noise walls in Charlotte, Raleigh, and now Durham. This topic will be further addressed at future meetings.

Mayor Holliday asked Mr. McKinney about the different County Commissioner groups in regards to the funding mechanism for PART.

What kind of resistance he had run into from the different County Commissioner groups?

Mr. McKinney said Davidson County had it on their agenda for consideration. They talked about it and they tabled it. He said he thought the needs of Davidson, Randolph, and Alamance are different from Guilford and Forsyth. Regional transit service may tend to be seen as something for the "big cities." Mr. McKinney explains it in terms of the congestion relief benefits to their citizens on trips into the service area. He also acknowledges that rural counties will not generate much money through rental car taxes. He thought that PART could support these areas through human service transportation coordination and land use planning coordination assistance.

Ms. Rakestraw was asked if there were any obstacles for the Guilford County Commissioners to get this project funded. She said she could not really perceive any. No one was lobbying to say, we do not want to participate. She felt everyone wanted to look over the information and get any questions that they may need answered and then move forward. She said she saw this as a positive proposal.

Mr. Perkins commented that if we do not get on with the study and the implementation now, we will be paying for it five, 10, or 15 times over in the future.

Mr. Carmany pointed out that there had been identified about seven, eight, or nine different human services providers in the PART area, which means nine different sets of administration and sometimes we have vans passing from Greensboro to Bowman Gray in Winston or going to Forsyth County, and their vans are passing ours coming into the Cone Hospital.

Mr. Perkins said one of the thing they always get complaints about and they hear it at their Council meetings from time to time, and that is the taxi service to and from the airport. Perhaps PART could address This issue. The Airport Authority's franchise with Airport Express effectively locks out other providers and the customer and business people are taking the hit.

Mr. Perkins said he would suggest having the County Commissioners be involved with the Forsyth County Commissioners, and come up with a Guilford-Forsyth cab license so that anybody who picks up here and/or delivers to the airport, has to obtain that license so that you can flow all over both counties, no matter whether it is in Summerfield, Greensboro, High Point, Winston, Lewisville, Kernersville, or whatever.

Ms. Carmany said that since PART has representatives from both Guilford and Forsyth County, it should be the entity dealing with this problem.

Mayor Holliday commented that the Airport Authority at this point may be amenable to listening on this issue, although it has not been in the past.

Mr. Vaughan said a local bill needs to be introduced to the General Assembly. The deadline is March 14th. The next opportunity to enter a local bill will be two years from now. The TAC would approve a resolution directing staff to draft a bill up on behalf of the MPO. Alma Adams, Chair of the Guilford Delegation, can introduce the bill, and that will drive the machinery. The City Attorney should be asked to draft the bill to amend North Carolina law to allow taxi cab service to be able to transport and pick up between the counties and at PTI.

It was pointed out that the next PART Board meeting would be March 14. Mayor Holliday said it would be good to have an endorsement from PART. Mr. Vaughan said the endorsement would not be needed by then. Mr. McKinney was asked to put this on PART's agenda.

Mr. Vaughan moved that the bill be prepared by staff and filled as set forth above, seconded by Mayor Holliday. There being no discussion, the motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. McKinney said that although the Airport Authority's taxi franchise locks out other providers, the did include a line item in their new agreement to allow PART to serve the Airport with transit vehicles.

Mr. McKinney said the concept of the regional bus service was to provide 30-minute service between a regional hub and Downtown Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and High Point. The service would be on 30-minute headways with free transfers. It is expected that service could start within 6 months of authorization through contracting, either through the private sector or the existing transit providers. PART would procure clean fuel buses for the service at the earliest possible time.

Mr. McKinney emphasized that rail is a realistic long term option for the Triad, but that such systems take a long time to implement. He referred to MARTA in metropolitan Atlanta, started 35 years ago through a narrowly approved referendum. Where would Atlanta be today without MARTA? He described the FTA New Starts program—the federal funding source for large scale public transportation projects. The program is highly competitive and requires demonstrating local financial commitment, as well as “transit supportive land use”. It takes elected officials to make that commitment, as well as public support. We have to identify some mass transportation corridors and pursue higher development densities in those areas.

The rail study is Phase 1, the major investment study phase. We can get into preliminary engineering at the end of this. We must follow-up on the land use work that has already been done, and we must show a financial commitment to demonstrate the ability to match New Starts grants with local funds. If everything went the best that it could, that is a 6-year process; realistically, it is likely to be 8 or 10, and could be more like 20.

Mr. McKinney then presented an illustration of the recipients of the year 2000 New Starts grants—he estimated that \$1 billion was disbursed in all.

Mr. Perkins said we should be dedicating right-of-way to this while we are doing the Painter Boulevard connector, the Western Loop, and etc. We are really behind the 8-ball by not doing that while we are in the early phases of area highway projects.

Mr. McKinney said that was true, and that made it more important to identify locations to preserve right-of-way now. He addressed some of the locations that PART’s consultants have looked at. He explained why in he thinks of potential regional transit taxes as user fees rather than taxes: largely because of the benefits to the entire transportation system.

The PART Board has asked the MPOs to action supporting the PART Board’s request for Board of County Commissioners’ approval to implement fees to support PART. The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County TAC will have a resolution in front of them this afternoon. He stated that such a resolution was available for the consideration of the TAC.

Mayor Holliday moved that the TAC approve the resolution in support of asking the Guilford County Commissioners to give the PART Board the authority to impose the 5 percent short-term vehicle car rental tax.

Mr. Vaughan suggested that the motion be tabled until the next meeting.

Ms. Rakestraw said that she agreed, and would be glad to share this with Mr. Landreth and others. She also said that they were waiting for each Commissioner to indicate when they are ready to deal with it, so she did not think there was a specific time frame at present. PART Staff has briefed the Commissioners on the proposal, but no. It was just when they get indications that the time is right.

She said that staff has been at the Commission meetings to give information, but there had been no formal request from the Board members to go there. They were sort of waiting for their representatives on the PART Board to indicate to them when it was a good time to come. On the other hand, the sooner we can start to provide services, the better it will be.

Mr. McKinney said the State is working towards major rail investments. They propose to match Charlotte and TTA with 25% of the project cost in those areas. The Transportation Finance Committee's report indicates the need to provide up to \$100 million a year the types of long-term rail investments under study in the Triad—and refers to the Triad along with TTA and Charlotte as recipient areas.

Ms. Carmany said in a conversation she had with David King, NCDOT a week or 10 days ago, he said, come October, PART has been "planning" for three years now and it is about time for us to starting having something to show for what we are doing. So we are being positively encouraged to move on and come up with something.

Southern Urban Loop (I-2402) Update

Mr. Mills distributed handouts. He described completion dates for certain segments of the Southern Urban Loop. Everything south of I-85 will be opened at one time in 2003. Construction costs for that 14 mile segment are approximately \$166 million. The completion dates are based on the contracts, although some of the projects are a little ahead, and hopefully it will be done a little sooner.

US 421 Interchanges (R-2612) Update

Mr. Mills said he needed more information to clarify the status of this project. The project description had long been for interchanges on US 421 at Woody Mill and Neely Road, and it had been his understanding that this was still the case. However, he recently checked the files which suggested that there the project would involve a grade separation with no access at Neely Road.

Mr. Perkins said he was concerned with the people currently served by water and sewer from the City of Greensboro between the existing City Limits and Forest Oaks. Where would those people have access back to US 421 to get them to the Urban Loop?

Mr. Mills said there would be an interchange where Alliance Church comes in. But someone could get from the west side of US 421 onto US 421 and then get onto the Loop. At this time, there will probably be an interchange there at the Outer Southern Loop and then at Woody Mill. The next one would be down at 62. The access at 22 has been closed off and that access will be replaced by Woody Mill.

Mr. Perkins said that 22 is closed off now, and eventually 421 will be limited access. And so you would get off the Belt Loop and the only place you would get off ultimately would be Woody Mill Road. So there would be no "off" of 421 for seven or eight miles. That does not make sense because there are City water and sewer lines running all the way down Liberty Road, all the way out to Forest Oaks, and some day, some time, that will be higher density than what is sitting there right now. And how is all of that going to get back to this Belt?

Mr. Mills said he would try to have all that information at the next meeting.

Mr. Ayers explained the problems with the interchanges which Pleasant Garden has been trying to solve.

Chair Carmany suggested that for the April 12th meeting, there be maps available and make sure we have more detailed information. She said she had in her possession a resolution from Pleasant Garden, restating what Mr. Ayers had just said to us.

OTHER ITEMS

Board Member Update

Mr. Mills said that City and NCDOT staff would be meeting tomorrow at 1 o'clock with RF Micro Devices to discuss project funding and development for widening of NC 68 between Gallimore Dairy Road and West Market Street.

Mr. Westmoreland said the other thing that will be discussed is the need to add of a feasibility study to the MTIP to look at a possible Pegg to Thatcher Connection west of NC 68 across I-40. Adding continuous collector street connections along the NC 68 corridor was one of the primary recommendations of the NC 68 Corridor Study prepared by NCDOT last year.

Mr. Mills said Mr. Landreth had brought up at the last meeting the connector at US 70 and the Quarter Mile Loop. They had received the plans in from Roadway Design. They have made their comments and sent them back to Roadway Design, so the final alignment should be set and right-of-way acquisition should begin soon.

Town Reports

None.

Staff Informational Items

Mr. Westmoreland said he had two quick items. A Council briefing has been held on public meetings scheduled for the Friendly Avenue, Lake Jeanette Road, and Creekridge Road Improvements. The Friendly Avenue meeting is scheduled for tomorrow evening at the Westminster Presbyterian Church from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. That involves roadway improvements from Westridge Road to Holden Road.

The Lake Jeanette meeting is scheduled for March 8 at Cathedral of His Glory from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The Creekridge Road meeting is scheduled for March 12 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Archer Elementary School.

Each project involves options to provide landscaped median divided sections in certain areas. There are some inherent safety benefits to that approach in addition to the aesthetic benefits. The hope is that sidewalks can be constructed on both sides of the each project—this is needed to make the community more walkable.

Mr. Westmoreland also announced that he had promoted Tyler Meyer to the position of Transportation Planning Division Manager. Mr. Westmoreland has reorganized GDOT to have five separate divisions, including a Planning Division. This Division has been created due to the importance of the transportation planning function, not only from the MPO standpoint, but from the

regional and city perspective as well. He said he thought Mr. Meyer had done a great job as the MPO Planner, and that great things are expected from him in his new role. The MPO Planner position will be advertised in the near future.

Mr. Meyer noted the Supreme Court ruling on the Clean Air Act case. He explained the impact which he thought the ruling would have on transportation. The ultimate impact is uncertain, but it appears likely to involve at least some delay in the implementation of the eight hour ozone standard somewhat. More information on this will be presented as it comes available.

Mr. Craig McKinney mentioned two scheduled events: a meeting of the Southern Guilford Area Plan committee and a NCDOT public information workshop for the planned pedestrian bridge over US 29 at McKnight Mill Road. Mr. Westmoreland he was glad to see the State moving forward with that badly needed project. There is a high density residential area to the east and a shopping center to the west. Several pedestrian fatalities have occurred at that location.

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There being no further business before the Transportation Advisory Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.